

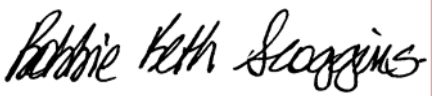
MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 1, 2007

TO: Robert S. Sherman, Director
Legislative Research Commission

CC: Laura E. Owens, Secretary
Education Cabinet

Beth A. O'Donnell, Executive Director
Public Service Commission



FROM: Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Executive Director
Kentucky Commission on the
Deaf and Hard of Hearing

RE: Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Annual Report
for the Fiscal Year 2006- 2007

Enclosed is the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Annual Report for the fiscal year 2006-2007. As per KRS 163.527, this report is to be submitted to the Kentucky General Assembly through the Legislative Research Commission.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at bobbie.scoggins@ky.gov. or at 502-573-2604 (V/T).

The Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Since its inception in 1995, the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP), administered by the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH), has served 12,709 applicants. From time to time the program has received letters of thanks from grateful recipients. These letters have served as an inspiration to the staff of the TAP, knowing that this program has been very successful in providing a much needed service to constituents of Kentucky.

"I truly cannot thank you enough for the difference receiving a CapTel telephone has made in my life. I always thought people were speaking inconsistently but now I know that I was not hearing the words. With the captions and what little hearing I have left I can hold a conversation without embarrassing myself. Thank you and your staff again for the wonderful telephone!"

(Hard of Hearing Consumer – Louisville)

"I received my new TDD from your program after mine broke from many years of use. I could not have afforded to buy one myself because I live on social security income only. Without your help many deaf would have no place to turn in my area. You do a wonderful service for us all!"

(Deaf Consumer – Fulton)

"Without my new cordless amplified telephone my children would never let me go to the garden again. Now they can check on me while I work. I can't thank you enough for sending it to me.....and FREE at that! What a wonderful service, I'm telling all my friends."

(Hard of Hearing Consumer – Rockholds)

"I love my PocketComm TTY, thank you. Now I can talk to all my friends in high school just like my hearing friends use their cell phones."

(Deaf Consumer – Lawrenceburg)

"I didn't feel a part of society anymore and was becoming more and more isolated. My friends did not call me to tell me what was going on anymore, leaving me lonely. The CapTel telephone you gave me has allowed me to participate in my community again. Thank you!"

(Hard of Hearing Consumer – Richmond)

"At 102 I never thought I'd hear my grand daughter's voice again, but now I can understand her again with the amplified telephone you gave me. Thank you for your service, it's a blessing."

(Hard of Hearing Consumer – Florence)

"The speech-impaired telephone you gave me is a godsend and it has changed my life back to normal again. You are a wonderful agency, please continue the good work."

(Speech Impaired Consumer – Ashland)

**Telecommunications Access Program
Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2006 - 2007**

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Ed. D
Executive Director**

In compliance with KRS 163.527, this annual report is submitted to the Kentucky General Assembly through the Legislative Research Commission.

“The Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall provide to the General Assembly an annual report on the operation of the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP). The report shall be due on July 1st of each year, beginning July 1, 1995, and, at a minimum, provide:

- (1) The number of persons served and the number of TDDs distributed;
- (2) The revenues and expenditures of the program;
- (3) Discussion of any major policy or operational issues;
- (4) Any changes the Commission plans to make in the program that does not require legislative action; and
- (5) Any proposals for legislative changes in the program.” KRS 163.527

The number of persons served and the number of STE's distributed:

The Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) received **894 new** applications during the 2006-2007 fiscal year. The status of all current applications for Specialized Telecommunication Equipment (STE) is as follows as of 6/29/2007.

| Status | Total |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Approved | 63 |
| Complete | 852 |
| Incomplete | 109 |
| Denied | 40 |
| Not Active | 9 |
| Total ** | 1,073 |

** Total status count does not match the number of new applications received during the FY due to receipt of some applications in the previous FY and processing in the current FY, or pending incomplete into the next FY.

DEFINITIONS:

Approved - Applications approved for which STE has been ordered but is pending delivery during the FY, or applications were approved but STE has yet to be ordered. This is the "waiting list" and identifies customers ready to receive equipment once funds are available.

Completed - Applications were approved and STE was delivered to consumers and paid for during the FY.

Incomplete - Applications are pending receipt of verification. Applications lacking information required to determine eligibility (approval/denial) are returned to the applicant with a request for additional information. Applications are kept pending for one year to allow adequate time to provide necessary verification.

Denied – Applications denied because the applicants did not meet the eligibility criteria in order to receive the STE. Notification is sent to each applicant outlining the reason for ineligibility and an explanation of when the applicant might be eligible is included (i.e. reapplications for equipment may be submitted after four (4) years from receipt of the first piece of equipment.)

Not Active – These applications have been pending verification for more than twelve (12) months. The applicant is notified and given an additional 30 days to submit the missing verification and if no response is received the application is changed to Not Active and archived. A new application is required if reapplication occurs after this determination.

907 consumers received their STE during the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

A breakdown of these applicants by degree of hearing loss is listed below:

| Degree of Hearing Loss | Total |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Deaf | 46 |
| Deaf w/ Limited Vision | 7 |
| Deaf-Blind | 0 |
| Hard-of-Hearing | 568 |
| Late-Deafened | 11 |
| Severely Hard-of-Hearing | 265 |
| Speech-Impaired | 10 |
| Total | 907 |

During FY 06-07 the number of applications decreased slightly within the program because deaf consumers are moving toward alternate technology (i.e., videoconferencing, web cams and internet relay services) for their telephone communication needs and the program does not currently distribute equipment to meet this need. The decrease in the number of applications and a streamlining of the approval process has resulted in downsizing program staff to one full time and one part time state employee and no temporary employees, allowing more of the program funds to be designated to equipment purchases. Outreach partnerships continue and upcoming public relation efforts, such as participating in the Kentucky State Fair, will continue to increase awareness of the program during FY 07-08 and should result in a higher number of applications.

The number of hard of hearing individuals in the Commonwealth, which includes those self identified as hard of hearing, severely hard of hearing and late deafened, continues to increase as the population ages. The highest demand for specialized equipment comes from this population, (93.5% compared to 92% last FY), who need amplified phones, speech strengthening telephones, voice carry over telephones and the CapTel device. Requests for equipment typically used by deaf constituents, such as Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD), continues to decrease (6% compared to 8% last FY). The TAP serves less that 1% deaf-blind or speech impaired individuals per FY.

AT&T (formerly BellSouth) partnered with KCDHH again in FY 06-07 to extend our outreach capabilities by including inserts in their billing invoices twice during the year, and this partnership will continue into the 07-08 FY. Program staff also uses videoconferencing, video relay interpreting, AIM and email, as well as traditional voice lines and interpreters, to explain requirements to professionals and consumers on a daily basis. During June 07 a mail out was sent to audiologists, speech pathologists, hearing instrument specialists and professionals that work directly with the deaf and

had of hearing throughout the state. We anticipate this outreach will increase incoming applications as professionals became more aware of the program's availability and the kinds of equipment available to meet the needs of their consumers. During the 07-08 FY video clips will be added to the KCDHH website describing the TAP application process in American Sign Language (ASL), in an attempt to reach deaf constituents who use ASL as their primary language and may find the written application confusing. The video clip will also be converted to a DVD so that professionals contacted by consumers to verify hearing loss can provide the explanation in ASL to those consumers.

Hamilton Telecommunications, Inc., Kentucky's Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) provider continues to partner with KCDHH to provide training to consumers on a one-to-one basis for those who utilize the relay service. This partnership has been a great benefit to both agencies and Hamilton provides data regarding the trainings in quarterly reports presented at the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) advisory board meetings conducted with the Public Service Commission (PSC). Consumers receiving amplified telephones are trained upon request by KCDHH staff, volunteers, and local advocates on a case-by case basis. Consumers are provided with written instructions and videotaped instructions (i.e., Captel) as part of the equipment package, so one-on-one training is minimal.

The contract with Hamilton to provide relay services within Kentucky is effective through July 30, 2008 with the potential for another three years renewal through 2011, if both parties agree. Customer satisfaction with Hamilton Relay is well documented and KCDHH is satisfied with their performance record.

KCDHH and the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) hosted the 2006 National Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) conference, as well as the National Association of State Relay Administrators (NASRA) conference, which was held in Louisville, KY from September 6 –13. Dr. Bobbie Beth Scoggins served as state Chair of both conferences and showcased Kentucky's program to the 37 states in attendance at both conferences. Feedback received from attendees indicated the conferences were a success and Kentucky was seen as a role model for state relay and equipment distribution programs.

Public Relation efforts such as E-blitzes, press releases and outreach trainings have been conducted throughout the FY, allowing program information to be dispersed on a broader base and in a timelier manner.

Equipment vendor contract renewals were processed during May 2007 and a modification was made to replace one cordless amplified telephone due to complaints from consumers. The program offers 24 pieces of equipment in enough variety to meet the needs of all consumers. Additions to the program or upgrades in technology are consistently pursued throughout the year and contracts are modified as required.

The KCDHH Internal Policy Analyst III represents the TAP and serves on several Advisory Boards for state, local and national organizations that serve the deaf and hard of hearing population and serves as Secretary for the national TEDPA organization. Meetings are held quarterly for the AT&T Advisory Board, the Kentucky Assistive Technology Service (KATS) Network Advisory Board, the Telephone Relay Service (TRS) providers Advisory Board, and the Lost Chord Society. Written reports from those meetings are compiled and included in the KCDHH quarterly reports which are distributed to all KCDHH Commissioners and Cabinet heads and archived as part of the agency's records retention.

Staff members with the TAP attended the following trainings during FY 06-07:

- About Deafness–Accessibility Training – Online course includes training on captioning, interpreting, Relay services, and Cochlear Implants, Hearing Dogs, Assistive Listening Devices and Assistive Technology, and Sign Language;
- Black Deaf Caucus conference and workshops at Eastern Kentucky University; and
- The Grantsmanship Training Program, which covered all aspects of researching grants, writing grant proposals and negotiating with funding sources.

Legislative Update:

During FY 06 - 07 the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) filed amendments to the Kentucky Administrative Regulations (KAR) governing the program. The amendments, which incorporated the program name change, became effective on March 9, 2007. The previous name, TDD Distribution Program, reflected the type of device used primarily by deaf individuals and consumers felt the TAP name better represented the whole population served.

With the passage of HB 468 and inclusion of its recommendations in the Governor's Budget language for FY 07 and FY 08, the funding base for the TAP remains at two cents per residential telephone line. Seven cents of the total nine cent surcharge on each residential telephone line is retained by Hamilton, Kentucky's Telephone Relay Service (TRS) provider. This increase for the TAP is effective through June 30, 2008 unless extended by the General Assembly.

During the 2007 Legislative session KCDHH contacted supporters to propose a permanent change to the TAP funding base. After discussions with all parties involved, including our Cabinet liaisons, it was decided that we should wait until the 2008 Legislative session to introduce such a bill.

**The revenues and expenditures of the Telecommunications Access Program
For fiscal year 2006-2007**

| REVENUE | Budgeted Expenditures | Actual Expenditures |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| FY 2007 Allotment | 590,000 | 357,841 |
| Rollover funds | FY 05-06 384 | FY 06-07 232,543 |
| TOTAL REVENUE | 590,384 | 590,384 |
| PERSONNEL EXPENSES | | |
| State Employee Salary | 100,400 | 66,450 |
| State Employee Benefits/Fringe | 45,900 | 19,450 |
| Other Personnel Services | 55,000 | 28,390 |
| Other | 5,500 | 1,539 |
| Total Personnel Services | 206,800 | 115,829 |
| OPERATING EXPENSES | | |
| Utilities | 4,200 | 2,201 |
| Maintenance and Repairs | 22,000 | 21,032 |
| Postage and Related Services | 2,500 | 1,887 |
| Miscellaneous Services | 4,500 | 4,545 |
| Telecommunications | 2,700 | 2,695 |
| Database | 100,000 | 0 |
| Computer Services | 17,000 | 16,142 |
| Supplies | 20,000 | 19,051 |
| TAP Equipment purchases | 200,000 | 154,671 |
| Travel Expense/ Allowances | 2,200 | 1,825 |
| Miscellaneous Commodities | 8,500 | 17,963 |
| Total Operating Expenses | 383,600 | 242,012 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | 590,400 | 357,841 |
| Rollover FY 06-07 | | 232,543 |
| 13-33-340-TBOO BALANCE | AS OF 6/29/07 | 232,543 |

**Breakdown of expenditures for equipment distributed and the
cost analysis during FY 06-07 is below:**

| STE (Telephone equipment) | Units | Unit Price | Cost per FY |
|--|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Ultratec 1140 Uniphone | 6 | \$183.00 | \$1,098.00 |
| Superprint 4425 w/ASCII | 10 | \$338.00 | \$3,380.00 |
| Pro 80 Gold | 24 | \$423.00 | \$10,152.00 |
| Pro 80 Gold with LVD | 2 | \$423.00 | \$846.00 |
| Ultratec Crystal Tone Plus | 124 | \$98.00 | \$12,152.00 |
| Ameriphone CL-4205 Cordless | 268 | \$137.95 | \$36,970.60 |
| Dialogue JV-35 Amp Speakerphone | 42 | \$81.84 | \$3,437.28 |
| Ultratec CapTel | 90 | \$420.50 | \$37,845.00 |
| Ultratec CapTel with LVD/USB port | 1 | \$485.50 | \$485.50 |
| Starplus 45 | 40 | \$79.98 | \$3,199.20 |
| ClearSounds 40XLC | 76 | \$78.85 | \$5,992.60 |
| Dialogue XL-50 | 68 | \$93.04 | \$6,326.72 |
| Dialogue XL-30 | 3 | \$72.80 | \$218.40 |
| Uniden 7248i Cordless | 134 | \$114.06 | \$15,284.04 |
| Ameriphone VCO | 9 | \$125.00 | \$1,125.00 |
| RC 200 Speakerphone | 0 | \$375.00 | \$0 |
| HC-SPAMP Speech Amplified telephone | 0 | \$60.80 | \$0 |
| Compact/C-TDD | 2 | \$208.00 | \$416.00 |
| PocketComm TDD | 3 | \$149.50 | \$448.50 |
| TeliTalk Speech Aid phone | 6 | \$925.00 | \$5,550.00 |
| Total STE (telephone equipment) | 908 | | \$144,926.84 |
| Signaling Devices | | | |
| Ultratec Clarity Tone Ringer | 144 | \$19.59 | \$2,820.96 |
| Sonic Alert TR 75 VAS | 181 | \$25.95 | \$4,696.95 |
| ClearSounds HT-CL1 Combo Signaler | 62 | \$33.00 | \$2,046.00 |
| Vibracell Ring – Tactile Signaler | 2 | \$90.00 | \$180.00 |
| Total Signaling Devices | 389 | | \$9,743.91 |
| Total Equipment pieces / cost | 1,297 | | \$154,670.75 |

One visual alert signaler (VAS), Amplified Ringer, Tactile Signaler or Combo Signaler, in addition to the STE (telephone equipment) is distributed per consumer upon completion of the application. Not all applicants request or receive a signaler, ringer or combo unit with their telephone equipment choice and some applicants may request a signaler only.

Discussion of any major policy or operational issues:

The TAP Advisory Board, which consists of consumers and agency representatives, meets at least once annually. The board met twice during the FY 06-07. Information and updates are provided via electronic mail or regular postal mail between face-to-face meetings. Written reports from the meetings are provided to the full Commission for approval, the distributed to the advisory board members and archived.

The current voting members*, Ex-Officio members** and TAP staff***are listed below. Consumer's terms expires on a rotating basis effective June 30th and are replaced as needed by the board through the nomination process. In May 2007, elections were held to replace two consumers and an additional position was added for a deaf-blind consumer. One of the speech impaired consumer positions remains vacant. Elected members may serve two consecutive four-year terms, while other member positions are mandated by law. TAP staff to not have voting rights.

| Last Name | First Name | Membership Status | Term Ends |
|------------------|-------------------|--|------------------|
| Stuckey | Robert | *KCDHH Commissioner Representative / Hard of Hearing Consumer / Advisory Board Chair | 2009 |
| Ziehr | Jeremiah | *Deaf Consumer | 2009 |
| Green | Bobby | *Deaf / Minority Consumer | 2009 |
| Fowler | Lewis | *Deaf Consumer | 2011 |
| Lawson | Johnny | *Speech-impaired Consumer | 2009 |
| Volk | Thomas | Speech-impaired Consumer | 2007 expired |
| | Vacant | *Speech-impaired Consumer | 2011 |
| Rogers | Judy | Hard of Hearing Consumer | 2007 expired |
| McGirt | Melinda | *Hard of Hearing Consumer | 2011 |
| Caldwell | Shannon | *Deaf-Blind Consumer | 2011 |
| Skaggs | Forest | *KY Telephone Association Representative | Law |
| Stevens | Jim | **Public Service Commission Representative | Law |
| Freeman | Trish | **KCDHH Commission Chair | Law |
| Scoggins | Bobbie Beth | **KCDHH Executive Director | Law |
| Holloway | Rowena | ***Internal Policy Analyst III | Staff |
| White | Sharon | ***Document Processing Specialist III | Staff |

With the passage of the amended regulations during the 06-07 FY the TAP application was updated along with the equipment insert and program brochures. All materials have been reprinted and are currently in use by program staff.

Legislative Plans for FY 06-07:

We have been in dialogue with the Public Service Commission (PSC) and Kentucky's current Relay Service provider, Hamilton, regarding the possibility of continuing to receive two cents of the current nine cents charged on each residential telephone line for TRS/TAP services. Both entities are in agreement that the TAP is beneficial to Kentucky consumers and needs the financial support to continue operations and expand on outreach efforts. KCDHH will file a petition with the PSC during the 07-08 FY, prior to the start of the 2008 legislative session, asking that the increased funding base be made permanent. Should that effort be unsuccessful, we will contact our previous sponsor and ask that a bill be introduced to allow the funding increase to become permanent through the legislative process.

Plans for FY 2006 – 2007, not involving Legislative changes include:

The Executive Director and the Internal Policy Analyst III will attend the National Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) conference in the fall of 2007. The Internal Policy Analyst III currently serves as Secretary of the TEDPA National Board and is assisting in the planning of the conference which will be held in Montana. The Executive Director will also attend the National Association of State Relay Administrators (NASRA) 2007 conference, where staff from the Federal Communications Council (FCC) will speak on federal mandates, changes in funding and upcoming legislation that will affect the technology that supports alternate communication modes such as videoconferencing.

Outreach plans for FY 07 - 08 include partnerships with the following entities:

- Hamilton Relay Service;
- AT&T;
- Kentucky Telephone Association;
- Kentucky Association of the Deaf;
- Alexander Graham Bell Association;
- Lost Cord Society;
- Veterans Administration;
- Hearing Loss Association of America;
- American Association of Retired Persons;
- Kentucky School for the Deaf;
- Kentucky Department of Education;
- Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs;
- Kentucky Speech Language and Hearing Association;
- Heuser Hearing Institute;
- Speech and Language Pathologists;
- Audiologists, Hearing Instrument Specialists; and
- Area Developmental Districts

Professionals, public and private agencies who serve the deaf, speech impaired, deaf blind and hard of hearing population are also part of the ongoing TAP outreach. Staff provides informational workshops and educational materials throughout the year to educate the public and professionals about the availability of services from both KCDHH and TAP.

A consumer satisfaction survey will be added to the KCDHH website by the end of 2007 to obtain feedback on the services provided through TAP. If consumers do not have access to the internet a hardcopy form will be mailed to obtain survey results. Results will be used to improve the services of KCDHH and TAP for all consumers.